

Melissa Yennie St. Juste  
6-12/PE&Health Teacher at Classical Magnet School  
[yenniemek@gmail.com](mailto:yenniemek@gmail.com)  
8609774233  
Hartford Public Schools

My name is Melissa Yennie StJuste. I am writing today in support of Raised Bill 948. As a Connecticut public school educator, Hartford Public School graduate, and parent, I have seen firsthand the impact that funding inequity has had on my K-12 education and also the education of my current students.

As a Hartford Public School student, I had no awareness of what education was like outside of the Hartford Public School district during my K-12 education. I assumed that by having the opportunity to receive an education in one of Hartfords Magnet Schools, I was receiving the best! It wasn't until my university teacher preparation program, that I had the opportunity to complete practicum hours at a variety of suburban schools. Those opportunities truly heightened my understanding of what schools looked like outside of Hartford. It was through those practicum experiences in suburban school that I realized the vast inequities in school funding. These funding inequities manifested in all aspects of schools; from the food students were offered, the books students had, the instruments that were available for students to play, the athletic programming, and even the course offerings. My current Hartford Public School students are still dealing with the same funding issues that I did as a student. Unfortunately, they have yet to gain the awareness to know what a quality education looks like. The differences in the quality of education across Connecticut school districts is unacceptable and disgraceful.

That's why I believe this bill must be passed. Funding inequities across and within our schools are preventing our students--particularly English Language Learners, students of color and children from low-income families--from getting the excellent education they deserve. Connecticut students have faced unprecedented hardship over the past year, and cannot wait multiple years to attend a fully-funded school.